

From: Connie Voget <voget.c.e@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 8:15 AM
To: DES SBCC
Subject: Supporting update to residential energy code requiring heat pumps

External Email

To the Washington State Building Code Council:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment in support of the proposed update to our state's residential energy code requiring new homes be built with high efficiency heat pumps for heating and cooling spaces and for water heating, and requiring increased ventilation for kitchens with gas ranges.

My name is Connie Voget and I am a member of the Green Team at Keystone United Church of Christ, Seattle. We recognize the urgency of reducing climate emissions. We recognize the disproportionate effects of the climate crisis on vulnerable communities. Representing the Green Team, I have advocated for legislation supporting our state's commitment to reducing climate pollution 95% economy wide by 2050. Now I advocate for action on this legislation.

Buildings in our state cause a quarter of our climate pollution and are our fastest growing source of climate pollution. This is due to the widespread use of gas for space and water heating. But benefits to moving off methane gas go beyond reducing climate pollution:

Health benefits - heightened risks for asthma and other illnesses associated with gas will be reduced. I understand well the importance of reducing the risk of asthma: I have a friend devastated by the loss of her grandson due to asthma. I have friends who struggle with the limitations imposed by asthma.

Benefits of jobs creation - in electrical upgrades, construction, and appliance installations.

Money saving benefits - from avoiding the expense of fossil fuel infrastructure and from lower utility bills.

Comfort and safety benefits - Heat pumps provide AC, which we increasingly need due to increasing occurrence of heat waves, many of them life-threatening. The risk of leaks and explosions will be eliminated. I note the devastating gas explosion of the Bellingham's Olympic Pipeline in 1999, with loss of life and with some environmental effects ongoing. I note the devastating gas explosion in nearby Greenwood in 2016. In my childhood a gas explosion leveled a building only blocks from my home. The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning will be eliminated. I lived through a carbon monoxide incident in my home when our chimney got blocked.

We in Washington are fortunate that the State Building Code Council exists to promote our health, safety and welfare through establishing building standards. By approving the proposed updates, this council fulfills this mission in a critically needed way. Thank you.

